

Community Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
For the Cancer Cluster Investigation
July 13, 2011

TAC Purpose: a). To provide assistance in determining what questions should be examined regarding cancer numbers – geographic region, time period, types of cancers, etc. and then and b). To identify options for how to answer the question(s)/hypothesis(es).

Working Hypothesis: There is an increased rate of cancers (gather data on all, possibly narrow down later based on confirmed exposures) within a ¼ mile radius around Ft. Detrick (Area A and B).

I. Introductions

Members Present: J. Bee (via phone); B. Brookmyer; R. Clark; J. Hahn; E. Kruse; G. Rudy (toward the end); J. Sawitzke; R. Watkins

New Members Introduced: Carroll Rice; Dianne Rice; Shirley Rice

II. Review of Notes from June 8 Meeting

Number of total surveys to be distributed for Ed Kruse's research project = 4,500 representing 1,500 from each area to be surveyed.

III. Update on Ed Kruse's Research Proposal

Plan to mail surveys to 1500 households randomly selected in 2-mile radius from Ft. Detrick and then compare rates to 1,500 households surveyed in both Middletown and Walkersville. UMD IRB (Institutional Review Board) administrative approval granted. Surveys to be mailed with self-addressed stamped envelopes. Plan to calculate and analyze odds ratio and to also plot the distance from Ft. Detrick. Met with Frederick County GIS (Geographic Information Systems) staff who was very helpful. UMD entered into a data use agreement to allow access to address lists. Ed reported that he was invited to participate in a State GIS panel that the County GIS staff is participating on. Randomization will be through a random digit assignment approach. Goal is to mail the surveys the 1st week of August. Ed announced that he is seeking opportunities to communicate in advance of the mailing of the surveys that the surveys will be distributed, the purpose, and offer to answer any questions. The survey forms will be coded. Analysis will include looking for the presence/absence of clusters in high/low risk areas and then map it and overlay water quality data. The goal is to have a rough analysis by mid-fall. If response rate too low Ed reported that he will consider alternate survey methodologies.

IV. Update on G. Rudy's Survey Proposal

Combined with item III above.

V. Update from Members on Other Data Collection Efforts

a. School-linked case finding

Only one class year, 1990 graduates, have had been contacted from Frederick HS and Thomas Johnson HS. Jen reported that 13 persons directly reported a personal history of cancer so far and that there were more who provided less complete information

about themselves or others. The class presidents sent an e-mail on Jen's behalf using their class lists. Ed offered to assist with mapping cases.

b. Old Address lists

Ed offered to explore whether the UMD and Frederick County data sharing agreement would cover past years of address data and whether it could be shared with others performing research on this issue.

c. Rice Family

Rice family members shared their history, questions, and concerns.

d. Story Collection

There was discussion of interest in cataloging stories with several members indicating an interest initiating such an effort prior to the information "going to the grave" and the possibility that there may be interested public health story writers.

VI. Sharing of Other information Relevant to Member Interests

a. National Academy of Sciences – No new information available.

b. Containment Laboratory Community Advisory Committee – Rolan sent an e-mail related to last night's meeting and summarized some of the key discussion points related to safety of labs.

c. KRF Testing – Dust tested from cistern on what has been referred to previously as the Krantz cistern and also from a bar across the street with ventilation slats. Sediment and water along Carroll Creek was not tested per John. John to check to see if testing results can be shared with the members.

d. Fort Detrick RAB (Restoration Advisory Board) – June meeting handouts are available online. Updated findings from archival search not available according to those who attended the meeting. TAP grant application drafted, but no persons with local standing have yet formed a committee to serve as an applicant for the technical assistance grant. The grant is understood to only be for providing technical interpretation of data already presented to the RAB. It was reported that off-site contamination characterization (i.e. testing) is planned.

VII. Next Meeting – August 17 at 7pm